export of services listing various facilities for export of services. These facilites includes recognition of export of services for Service Export House Status and extension of schemes such as the Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme/ Export Oriented Unit Scheme/Export Processing Zone Scheme/Software technology park scheme etc.

Scrapping of DEPB Scheme

2949. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to scrap the DEPB scheme in view of number of complaints about its misuse;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the scrapping of DEPB scheme is going to affect adversely the exporters and there are demands to introduce any other similar scheme before scrapping the DEPB; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and justification of scrapping the DEPB scheme?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) There is no proposal to scrap the DEPB scheme at present, Remedial action regarding cases of misuse is taken regularly as and when such instances are noticed.

Obligations under WTO

2950. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether multilateral obligations under WTO. warrants certain changes in the EXIM policy;

(b) if so, the changes made in this regard;

(c) whether India propose to remove restrictions on the EPZs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Being Member of WTO, India abides by the rules and regulations of WTO. Certain changes pertaining mainly to phased removal of Quantitative Restirctions have been introduced with effect from 1.4.99 in accordance with our agreements with our trading partners & multilateral obligations under the WTO.

(c) and (d) The Government has already announced conversion of Export Processing Zones into Free Trade Zones w.e.f. 1.7.99 and is working out the modalities for such conversion.

Impact of GATT Agreement on Industries

2951. SHRI PARMAESHWAR KUMAR AGRARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whehter any comprehensive study has been made to assess the impact of GATT agreement on our major, medium and small industrial sectors;

(b) if so, what are the findings; and

(c) how Government propose to meet this threat to our industrial sector on this account?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) From time to time, studies have been commissioned by academic institutions, industry associations, different Ministries and Departments of Government, including the Ministry of Commerce, to assess the impact of GATT Agreement of 1947 on our industrial sector. The findings of the studies are varied.

(c) GATT has mainly been involved in reduction of Tariffs through repeated rounds of trade talks. India has set its bound rates of tariffs keeping in view the best interests of its exporters and its domestic industry.